

Fen Skating Scrapbook 1897-1989

compiled by

Mike Petty



A compendium of cuttings relating to
Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, Newmarket, Royston
and the surrounding villages

Thousands of Fascinating Snippets of Cambridgeshire Life
featured in my Cambridge News
'Looking Back' columns

*The complete Cambridgeshire Scrapbook is published online at
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MIKE PETTY.
A Cambridgeshire Scrapbook 1897-1989
revised 2015 08 05

Introduction

***For the last 50 years I have helped thousands of people research Cambridge and its county.
This index is my way of saying 'Thank You' for all they have taught me***

Each evening from March 1997 to April 2015 I compiled a 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News in which I featured snippets from issues of 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago. I sought out unusual items relating to villages and areas of Cambridge not usually featured

These stories are from issues of the Cambridge Daily/Evening/Weekly News or Cambridge Independent Press between March 1897 and December 1989. It includes the 'Cambridge Independent Press 'From Our Old Files' stories 1915-1920, 1940-45

Many entries include the date of the original story in the form YY/MM/DD - thus 33 01 29 means 29th January 1933. Other dates are those on which the article appeared in my columns. I have notes of the precise dates and pages in which the original appeared

I can supply actual copies of many of these articles. If you would like any of these please let me know.

The newspapers are held in the Cambridgeshire Collection together with other Cambridge titles back to 1762. They have newspaper cuttings files on 750 topics from 1958 to date together with a variety of indexes including a record of stories for every village in Cambridgeshire between 1770-1900.

I initiated much of the indexing and have many indexes of my own. Please feel free to contact me for advice and assistance.

For more details of newspapers and other sources for Cambridgeshire history see my website www.mikepetty.org.uk

This index was produced as a working part of my personal research resources and would benefit by editing. If you can make any of it work for you I am delighted. But remember you should always check everything!

Please make what use of it you may. Please remember who it came from

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Fen Skating Scrapbook, compiled 10 November 2016

Note: Alan Bloom 'Skaters of the Fens' has list of skating matches.

1860

Sir – I remember the winter of 1860 when Midsummer Common was covered with water. A severe frost set in and for two months there were torchlight processions and skaters appearing and disappearing like phantoms along the course. There was horseracing in the summer and two large wooden stands erected. Some things have not changed: the miserable, horrid, slow old 'grinds' or ferries. When will Cantabs wake up and have free bridges for foot passengers? – An Ely Old Boy - 06 06 23c & d

1870s

1876 01

First skating rink opened Jan 1876 Downing St [17.2]

1879

Skating races – see Bloom

1880s

1880

Skating races – see Bloom

1881 01

National Skating Association cup races on Stourbridge Common

1881

Skating races – see Bloom

1887

Skating races – see Bloom

1888

Skating: proposal to flood Stourbridge Common for skating [5.25]

1889

Skating races – see Bloom

1890s

1890

Skating races – see Bloom

During 1890-91 was 55 days frost, field behind Bartholomew's house artificially flooded, illuminated at night [17.6]

1890 12

Littleport skating match - final between J. Smart & T. Wells; Smart on the left won the race and later became Champion of the World; Wells of 'Windy Hall' Isleham Fen - ILN 3.1.1891

1891

Skating races – see Bloom

1892

Skating races – see Bloom

1893

Skating races – see Bloom

1894

Skating races – see Bloom

Skating rink established Adams Road, developed by University skating club [446.8.3]

1895

Skating races – see Bloom

Great frost lasted from January to March unbroken except for very brief thaws; from Jan 18 to 25 were snowstorms, floods & north-west gales; frosts of 15 to 20 degrees turned hundreds of acres of flooded land into skating rinks; for 2 months was possible to skate from Cambridge to Grantchester or Ely. Three fields at Newnham flooded & electric lights allowed skaters to flock there in evenings; ice carnivals & skating races on river from Bottisham Lock to Ely [5] Arcade closed due to lack of support, Marie Lloyd concert cancelled: when new Corn Exchange was opened the old used as shopping centre will 1884. For while stood empty till Ernie Hayward, enterprising local concert promoter opened it as Variety Music Hall which successful for a while. Its closure brought about by long frost in December 1894 to March 1895 which brought about night skating by electricity - a great novelty which emptied Arcade CC pic

Skating: man skates from Cambridge to Denver Sluice & back in a day [1.12]

Skating: floodlighting generator installed Lingay Fen [6.14]

Skating match at Lingay Fen in Feb 1895 – photo – 42 02 18

1897

Skating races – see Bloom

1899 12 16

The frost continues with great severity in the fens. The University Skating Club at Cambridge was opened yesterday. The ice was fairly thick, but rough. The moors at Littleport were open to the public, but there was practically little skating elsewhere. The National Skating Association were busy making the necessary arrangements for bring off the Championships and other races and entered into arrangement with the proprietor of the Littleport Club to hold the British Championships at that resort.

1900s

1900

Skating races – see Bloom

1900 02 10

For the first time the British Amateur Skating Championship has been decided at Littleport. At no venue in Great Britain are the arrangements so to up-to-date. All Cambridge sportsmen will welcome Albert Tebbit's success. He has had to wait five years to have his third race for the championship which has always been held by a man from Welney – the little hamlet known as the metropolis of speed skating.

1900 02 11

A successful amateur skating competition open to all within a radius of fives miles was held on the championship skating course at Swavesey. The ice was not looking its best, being in some places rough and bumpy. The Prize Challenge Cup (to be won twice) was given by Mr Ben Thorp of Swavesey and Messrs Norman Bros generously gave the prizes. CC pics

1900 11 21

The National Skating Association meeting heard that the Fen Centre of the Speed Departmental Committee was enabled to bring off both the Amateur and Professional Speed Skating Championships at Littleport, Mr A.E. Tebbit retaining the former, while the latter was

won by Fred Ward. James Smart, who had for so long held the title, did not compete, as he has retired from the racing track.

1901 01 10

Prospects of early skating are splendid, and unless there is an immediate change the exhilarating pastime will be indulged in tomorrow at the Littleport rendezvous. Swavesey is also flooded and will soon bear. Whether the National Skating Association will decide to hold the Championships there or at Littleport is not yet known. There is much to recommend both places, but whereas they lack length of a proper course at Littleport, the arrangements for racing are almost perfect.

1901 12 27

Up to Monday afternoon there was every prospect of a Christmas such as Englishmen love, clear skies, hard roads and several degrees of frost. Vendors of skates had already done a brisk trade and those who possessed the pleasurable implements hauled them out of their summer resting places, furbished them up and promised themselves some hours' enjoyment on the ice during the Christmas holidays. Just as the ice was at bearing point in came the thaw and Yuletide was ushered in with driving rain. The treachery of the English climate is sufficient explanation.

1902

Skating races – see Bloom

1902 02 19

The National Skating Association were able to bring off the British Amateur Championships at Lingay Fen. The ice at the start was in a fair condition but the sun coming out quickly affected it. In the final Albert E. Tebbitt was very quick at the start and left his opponent, F. McGuire of Boston, a long way behind. Cheered by the spectators he showed surprisingly good form, considering the state of the ice and won easily, amid considerable enthusiasm
CC pics

1903

Skating races – see Bloom

1903 01 17

A sad skating fatality occurred at Cowbit Wash, at a point known as Brotherhouse Bar, about six miles from Spalding. A young lady, her brother and a man to whom she was engaged started off towards Crowland, skating on the new river which runs through the Wash. The water here is very deep and the ice giving way, all three fell in. Every effort was made to rescue them but the girl was drowned and the two men were in imminent danger, one of them being taken from the water in an exhausted condition. The deceased was the daughter of the district manager of the Wombwell Main Colliery Company.

1903 01 21

An inquest was held at Spalding touching the death of a young lady drowned whilst skating on Cowbit Wash. Her brother had made very gallant attempt to save her but there were two farm labourers only yards away. They could have saved his sister but they would not help. If only they had taken their coats off they might have reached them and got the girl out, but they stood looking on like cowards. He never saw such cowardice in his life. The jury strongly condemned their conduct, though who they were no one seemed to know.

1903 01 27

Roads at St Ives assumed a dangerous condition for pedestrians, as a sharp frost had made them as slippery and smooth as glass. On Sunday morning one could skate from St Ives to Hilton on the main road, a distance of over four miles, without injury to the skates. Mr Thomas Phillips, wholesale fruiterer of the Market Hill slipped and sustained serious injury to his thigh. Mr Mason, the noted bone setter, of Wisbech, was sent for but could not come.

1905

Skating races – see Bloom

1905 01 06

For the last three days the thermometer has been registering eleven degrees of frost; should it hold the professional skating race open to all the world for the Littleport Fifty Guineas Challenge Cup will take place. It is imperative that skaters all over the country should receive due notice; once the amateur champion, W. Housden of Wicken Fen, did not hear and was unable to defend his title. There is already a fine sheet of ice on Lingay Fen but it is doubtful if the public will be allowed on it for a few days. Sheets of ice promise to be ready for use at Newnham shortly.

1905 01 27

Skating would have been quite possible on the Electric Light Ground, Newnham, today had not some evilly disposed person drawn the water from the ground the other evening. The work was done with a care and thoroughness worthy of a better cause. The bank of the ditch which runs from the river to the pump was cut through and so great a fall allowed that the whole of the water on the ground was drained away. Two ladies heard somebody at work on the bank but imagined it was the proprietor and paid little heed. In addition to the annoyance caused the proprietor has suffered a considerable financial hardship. 05 01 27a

1906 03 24

When Albert Tebbitt was handed the King's Cup by the President of the National Skating Association he was without progeny. But within 24 hours he became the father of a sturdy boy. His own father, when 50 years of age, was still a formidable opponent and it was predicted that any son of his would become a future champion. A few jokes were cracked about a future young Tebbitt skating gaily away to the North Pole. It is possible that the glacier age may arrive during the lifetime of the latest addition to this athletic family and the predictions be quite within the bounds of probability. 06 03 24a

1906 06 23

1907 01 25

Skating – British Championships arranged – 07 01 25a

1907 01 26

In glorious weather a large number of professional skaters competed for the Fifty-Guinea Cup at Littleport. On the outward journey on the mile-and-a-half course the competitors reached a quite extraordinary speed but the return leg was quite a different tale; great stamina was essential to push against the powerful wind. W. Housden beat E. Moxon in the final. 07 01 26

1907 02 05

Littleport Skating Club's amateur race attracted 30 competitors. The ice was in good condition but a fairly heavy fall of snow necessitated the use of the snow plough to remove a coating that probably helped increase the times of some of the heats. It was won by F.W. Dix of Raunds. But a thaw means that the ice at Lingay Fen has been considerably weakened and the British Championships have had to be postponed. 07 02 05

1908

Skating races – see Bloom

1908 01 10

Hundreds of London skating enthusiasts availed themselves of train excursions to the fens which presented a practically unlimited area of ice in good conditions. Miles and miles were available. Not since 1895 have Cambridge people had such a large extent of frozen river with a splendid run from the Railway Bridge to Baitsbite Locks. Even man's modern eyesores were transformed: telegraph and telephone poles were linked with strands of silken beauty and wire-netting was outlined in crystals with the fragile delicacy of old lace. 08 01 10 f & g

1908 01 17

Ancient inhabitants rack their brains in vain for a parallel to the extraordinary weather of the past fortnight, bringing in its train a record crop of influenza. The changes from 20 degrees of frost to a damp muggy air and then back again have caused the National Skating Association

to rearrange the Championships which took place at Lingay Fen in almost perfect conditions. The ice was hard and entries above average. 08 01 17b

1909

Skating races – see Bloom

1909 10 27

George 'Fish' Smart, the prettiest and fastest skater Britain has ever produced, has from injuries sustained in an accident at the new dock which is being constructed at Hull. He was the most famous of the three famous 'Welney Division' of fen skaters founded by the renowned 'Turkey' Smart. He started skating as a boy and beat his all-conquering cousin, George See in 1878. But he retired when beaten by his younger brother James. 'Fish', who was 51, had been completely lost sight of in sporting circles in recent years. CDN 09 10 27 CC pics

1910s

1910

Was skating to be had, but no races were held – Bloom p81.

Complete blank as far as ice skating was concerned from Jan 1910 to Feb 1912 – Bloom p81
1910 12 09

George Storey was actively engaged in building operations in Romsey Town for many years. Later he conducted an ironmonger, painter and paperhanger's business in Mill Road and then traded as a cycle agent. He had been a member of the Liberal '400' for many years, was the first treasurer of the Cambridge Ratepayers' Association and served on the committee of the Mammoth Show, Wanderers' Cycle Club and National Skating Association. His widow is head of the toy and fancy business in Regent Street while his eldest daughters are founders of the first Cambridge Ladies' Cycling Club and conductor of dancing classes. 10 12 09f

1911

Rinking very popular, carnivals at Chesterton rink & hockey club associated with it [7.12]

Field opposite South Green Road illuminated, barrel organ [17.6]

1911 02 07

There was skating on Mere Fen Swavesey. In the centre the ice was fairly good and safe but at the sides it was weak and many got their feet and legs wet. Three visitors from Cambridge afforded some amusement. Declining the services of the men with chairs they sat down on the bank after spreading out handkerchiefs to protect their clothing. They put on their skates and went boldly forward. But the thin ice near the bank gave way and one man dropped about two feet into the water. The chairmen laughed heartily and the visitors beat a hasty retreat – 11 02 10d

1912

Skating races – see Bloom – "miles of ice in fenland"

1912 02 09

The weather was brilliant and the ice splendid for the race for Littleport Skating Club's 50-guinea challenge cup. There was a strong wind blowing down the course, the winner of the toss having the advantage of the shelter of the spectators after the last turn, this accounting for one or two wins. This wind made the necessity of three races a trying ordeal. After a dispute over the toss in the final round C. Brett lead all the way but Greenhall, by crossing over and finishing up on the wrong side of the course was placed fourth. 12 02 09c & d

1916

Heavy snow, snow ploughs needed, soldiers snowball fight Parkers Piece [2.25]

1916 01 05 CIP

Death. — A well-known Cambridge character passed away at the infirmary on Monday morning in the person of Jack Pain, who is believed to have been 60 years old. He was a

familiar figure in Conservative circles as an odd-man in elections and was always seen at Lingay when skating was in progress

1917

Longest and most severe frost since 1895 – Bloom p85

1917 01 31

Skating at Newnham – photo feature – 17 01 31a

1918 01 16

Fun on the ice photos: skating at Newnham = 18 01 16b Skating at Newnham – photos – 19 02 12f

1919

Severe frost, skating, serious floods, February [1.14]

Skating held due to severe frost [2.17]

Mildest run of winters for many years – Bloom p85

1919 02 12

Severe Weather. — The severe weather has given local skaters the opportunity of donning their "pattens" once again and good sport has been enjoyed throughout the district

1920s

1922

Bartholomew's Electric Light Skating Rink, Grantchester Meadows

1924

Skating for a day or two – Bloom p85

1925 02 02

The overnight frost in Cambridge was sufficiently severe to ensure another day's sport for skaters. At the Cambridge sewage Farm, Milton Road, where the ice had a thickness of about two inches, skating was continued with safety and there were quite a number of people, chiefly Varsitymen, "making gay while the ice holds". The popular plus four suit and warm pull-over, is just the thing for this kind of sport, but one noticed a number skating in ordinary suits.

1925 12 06

Sir – I must utter a strong protest against the action of some person in authority in the town in trying to put a stop to skating on the Corporation Sewage Farm at Milton. It does seem a pity that when the opportunity for such a splendid form of recreation occurs only once in a generation, that some kill-joy should throw hot water, in this case, on such inexpensive pleasure for the public, with notices of 'keep off the ice', barbed wire entanglements, and a policeman taking the names of trespassers on skates. There were hundreds taking the risk of being prosecuted rather than miss the opportunity of such splendid sport - Bertram Pearson

1926 01 23

Skating has been in full swing over the weekend. The Cambridge Sewage Farm has been the rendezvous of the majority of skaters and on Sunday over 500 skaters were 'on' in the afternoon. Mr Nicholls' field in Grantchester Meadows was flooded and many skaters availed themselves of the opportunity it offered, whilst others went over to Swavesey. Hundreds indulged in winter sports on the slopes of Royston Heath, tobogganing and ski-ing were general

1926 02 06

Councillor Briggs said he was very pleased the Committee were raising the wages of men working at the Cambridge Sewage Farm by about one farthing an hour. He remembered when

there was skating on the farm the chairman said it was dangerous, because there were germs about. (Laughter). These men were there daily and were engaged in a dangerous occupation, and a very unpleasant one. The men got 38s. (£1.90) a week, and extra for sludge work. They had the best of conditions. (Laughter). They had a shed which they ran into when there was a shower. What better conditions could they have? The rate for farm labourers was 30s a week (£1.50)

1927

Skating races – see Bloom

1927 02 16

Syd Greenall, the famous fen skater and professional champion of 1901, has died of double pneumonia. He was born in Cambridgeshire 42 years ago. At Belle Vue Kennels, Manchester, last summer, he was bitten by a dog and said, “This will kill me”. Greenall was not only one of the world’s fastest skaters, but was also a fine figure skater.

1927 12

Snow began Christmas day & led to most complete stoppage of road & rail traffic since coming of motor car [1.13]

1928 01 20

Upwell was celebrating a flying resident - on ice - Cyril Horn the modest sportsman who had just won the British Amateur Ice Skating Championship to add to his numerous cycling championships; Horn was brought from his home by motor car with the Upwell Band marching in front to the dinner in the Public Hall where 160 people celebrated their hero - true successor to the great fenland champions of the past like Fish Smart and his brother James - whose death was reported in May [WS 20.1 Ch 16.5 p2]

1929

Skating races – see Bloom

1929 02 17

For the first time since 1895 there was skating on the River Cam. A thick sheet of ice powered with white snow, stretched unbroken from Silver Street to the electric light works. It was too inviting to be resisted and several skating parties took advantage of it. Many undergraduates took to the ice in front of King’s College and at Quayside a man was seen cycling on the slippery surface. However the ice bore and he neither came off nor went in. At Silver Street it was possible to cross to the mill on the ice but below Jesus Lock, where the dredges is at work, the ice was broken up by the flow and black pools and crevices had appeared in the thin surface.

1929 02 23

All Cambridge seemed to be skating or carrying skates this morning and there is something like five inches of ice on many parts of the Granta. Eight hardy spirits took the plunge at the Town Bathing Sheds though it took nearly half an hour to break the ice. There have been bathers ever since the front began and many of them have hardly missed a day. The cold was so severe that the comb stuck in the head of one of them who was doing his hair. But the Open Flying Mile Straight Race, fixed to take place at Cowbit Wash, near Spalding, was abandoned after the Skating Association reported that it was not possible to provide a straight mile course to conform with the conditions.

1929 02 24

C.W. Horn did not, as he had hoped, beat the professional time for the three-mile’ circular skating course at Lingay Fen. The ice, though hard underneath, was distinctly soft on top and it gave the officials some anxiety owing to the large number of people who insisted on clustering round the finish. The crowd numbered several hundred. The closest heat was between G.E. Martin and F. Bebas from Spalding, there being only two-and-a-half seconds between them

1929 04 29

Sir: Quite a number of people took advantage of the frozen river last weekend to skate to Ely and among them were three Newnham girls. It is 34 years since last such a journey was possible. It was February 1895 that I and two friends undertook the journey. On arrival it was suggested we continue to Denver Sluice but after two miles the ice was very bad, so we returned. I wonder how many have ever succeeded in it, a distance of 72 miles there and back. I am fond of skating and have been to Ely five times – ‘Septuagenarian’ 1929 04 29

1929 04 29

National Skating Association jubilee – CDN 29.4.1929

1930s

1931 01 16

Mr Charles Morley has presented a handsome trophy to the National Skating Association for a one-mile race for amateurs who are not holders of the first-class speed badge. At present 90 per cent of skating contests have been practically foregone conclusions as one or two skaters carry off all the prizes, by debarring these men the race will be much more open. It is to be skated on an oval course rather than one requiring a length of 600 yards. This will enable fen skaters to compete more successfully on indoor rinks and Continental courses. 31 01 16f & g

1933

Skating races – see Bloom

1933 01 27

Skating at Lingay fen – 33 01 27a

Amateur & professional skating championships of Britain held Lingay Fen Feb

Amateurs: 1... miles C.W. Horn, Upwell 4 min 51 secs

1 mile for Morley cup: L.B. Carter, Over 3 min 15 sec

Professional championship

Pearson (Mepal) - holder, 2nd S.G. Scott, Welney 3 A.H. Ward, Emneth (Time Was)

1933 02 02

Alderman Oliver Papworth of Over, ‘the Major’, was a successful lawyer and councillor who served in the Territorials and Rifle Association. He was the founder member of several Masonic lodges but was best-known in the realms of sport. He was impervious to cold and wet and only last week when raw winds were blowing and skaters were enjoying themselves he was to be seen without an overcoat. 33 02 02a & b

1933 12 18

A crowd of 200 people saw skating races for the Duddleston Cup at Lingay Fen. The ice was not of the best and records remained intact. The winner was C.W. Horn, the National Skating Association champion, whose time was very much faster than ever previously recorded, though the race has never before been over an oval course. Runners up were R. Wyman of Stretham, G.W. Martin of Nordelph and L.B. Carter of Over

1933 12 18

For first time in history National Skating assoc get 3 events decided before Christmas

1½ mile amateur championship, Cameron cup and Duddleston Cup all won by 29 year old Upwell skater C.W. Horn - his 4th success in succession, equalling long-standing record of A.W. Tebbitt

1935

Skating races – see Bloom

1935 01 15

L.B. Carter the young amateur skater and cyclist of Over is proceeding to Switzerland for a fortnight’s training, followed by competition as a representative of Great Britain in some international matches at Davos where all the finest speed skaters do their training. The International Ice Hockey Association is sending a team and wanted some speed skaters to join the party. The Fen Committee first approached C.W. Horn, who is in a class by himself. He

was unable to accept at such short notice but Messrs Chivers allowed Carter time off work to attend. 35 01 15a

1936

Skating races – see Bloom

1936 02 10

Skating at Newnham – photo – 36 02 10

1936 08 22

Over and Swavesey Skating Association was presented with a 50-guinea solid silver trophy to be known as The Chicago Cup for the English Grand Prix. It will be competed for by amateur skaters from all England over a course of one-and-a-half miles with three turns. The donor, Mr C.A. King, is a native of Over who has spent many years in America. He has taken a great interest in skating throughout his life and has previously given two other Chicago Cups for local competitions. 36 08 20

1938 02 28

Sir Frederick Hiam, a former High Sheriff, died at his residence, Grange Road. He was best-known as an agriculturalist, acquiring many farmers in the Eastern Counties after 1910. He was Director of Vegetable Supplies in the Ministry of Food 1918-21 and toured the Colonies, being knighted for his services. He took a great interest in skating, winning the 220 yards word championship in 1895 in record time that was unbeaten for 10 years; and was president of Cambridge Town Football Club. He was a member of the Ouse Drainage Board and chairman of three Drainage Commissioners. His funeral will take place at Ely, where Lady Hiam was laid to rest three weeks ago. 38 02 28

1938 03 04

Albert E. Tebbitt formerly of Milton and farmer of 400 acres at Wentworth was British amateur skating champion 1895-1905; won the cup outright, also winning Duddleston Cup and Cameron Cup twice. In 1895 skated dead heat with H.A. Palmer over 37.5 miles on the Cam. 38 03 04d

1940s

1940

Skating races – see Bloom

1940 01 27

Skating at Newnham – photo taken fortnight ago, blocked due censorship – 40 01 27a

1940 03 29

Versatile Sportsman. — Cambridge has lost one of its most versatile and best liked sportsmen by the death, which occurred on Monday in a nursing home, of Mr. Harry Coulson. He was 74 years of age and his home was at 16, Grantchester Road. The late Mr. Coulson was a native of Cambridge and in his early days was a baker and confectioner in Magdalene Street, and played for the Cassandra and Victoria Cricket Clubs. He went to Cheltenham College as a coach and after, two years there was coach at Bedford Grammar School for six years. He returned to Cambridge on being appointed groundsman at King's and Clare, a position he held for some 30 years. When he was appointed to the position the ground was on the site of the new University Library in Burrell's Walk, and during the time the ground was occupied by the 1st Eastern General Hospital, Mr. and Mrs. Coulson rendered valuable service by catering for the nurses. The present King's and Clare ground at Barton Road was laid out by Mr. Coulson. In his younger days he won fame as a cricketer when playing for Cambridgeshire. In a fortnight in 1909 he performed two remarkable bowling feats. Against Herts., at Hitchin, he took eight wickets for 13 runs, and then, at Newmarket, against Norfolk, he took eight wickets for only five runs. In commemoration of this accomplishment he was presented with a rose bowl. Mr. Coulson had many other sporting interests. He could make 80 and 90 breaks at billiards; he won the championship of the Cam; he skated in the amateur championship, and won trophies on the running track. He also used to breed poultry, and twice won

championship cups at the Crystal Palace. Mr. and Mrs. Coulson celebrated their golden wedding in November, 1933. There are six daughters, all married.

1942 92 18

Skating match at Lingay Fen in Feb 1895 – photo – 42 02 18

1945 02 02

Skating Accident — while skating at the Willows Skating Rink, Cambridge, on Monday evening, Mrs. M. C. Thompson, of 47 Victoria Park, Cambridge, hurt her wrist, and a fracture was suspected. She was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital in the Borough ambulance.

1947

Skating races – see Bloom

1947 01

On January 1st ... severe winter ... the river Cam froze and the skaters were able to take to the ice with racing for the Morley cup starting at Bury Fen and attracting large crowds of onlookers WS 47 02 16.

1950s

1950

Skating races – see Bloom

1951

Skating races – see Bloom

1952

Skating races – see Bloom

1954

Skating races – see Bloom

1954 02 02

The skating championship of the fens was held at Cambridge Sewage Farm when the Ralph Moore Cup was won by D. Beba of Moulton Chapel. As temperatures dropped still further last night, pipes became frozen up and water engineers were inundated with calls for aid. The new electrical apparatus for thawing pipes is intended primarily for use at institutions where a large number of people are deprive of water. There is only one machine operated by a skilled electrician who can deal with perhaps a dozen cases a day. No more orders can be accepted for three days.

1954 02 03

Mr Charles F. Morley, who died recently, was a cyclist who won the Eastern Counties championship for every distance from sprint to fifty miles. He was truly a great little sportsman. He was a founder member of the Granta Cycling Club & many of his successes were gained on the quarter mile circular dirt track of the University Bicycling Club off Grange Road. As a speed skater he was up with the amateurs of his day; he was elected chairman of the National Skating Association Fen Department and presented a handsome challenge cup. He was the sole survivor of a quartet of friends who made local and national history at the turn of the century including J.H. Priest, one-mile cycling champion, F.J. Christmas, cross-country champion and A.E. Tebbutt, amateur skating champion of Great Britain.

1955

Skating races – see Bloom

1955 01 21

the fen skaters were out – at Bury fen the Ralph Moore cup for the amateur skating championship of the fens was won by Don Beba from Whaplode who beat Warrington for Over in the final; Dickie Jeeps, the Rugby International, came 5th IP 55 01 21

1956

Skating races – see Bloom

1956 02 06

The British Amateur Ice-Skating Championship held at Bury Fen, Earith, was attended by eight skaters who had received trials for the British Olympic team. The entry of 32 was the largest ever known but the bulk of the competitors were London rink men and local skaters had little opportunity to shine. The Drake Digby Memorial Shield for boys resident within a 40-mile radius of March was won by A Bloom of Bressingham. 56 02 06

1959 01 17

British amateur skating, Mare Fen, Swavesey – 59 01 17

1960s

1961 12 30

The British Amateur fenland skating championships at Bury Fen, Earith, were curtailed by snow falls. Skaters and spectators tried out the cleared patches and made a journey to the only source of heat – a small hot-dog stand on the edge of the fen. Then the noise of a starting pistol presaged the whip of skates over the ice. Later the noise was changed to the gentler swish of drizzle and when this accumulated into small pools, the racing was abandoned. 61 12 30a

1963 01

7 foot drifts, minus 32¢, water mains frozen, January, skaters on Backs [2.10,2.11,2.12,4.3]

1963 01 18

W.B. Holtum recalls people skating from St Germans sluice to Boston, then skating back; describes trip – 63 01 18d

1963 01 25

By river to Grantchester – walking on ice – 63 01 25b

1963 02 02

Parts of the Backs should be flooded and turned into skating rinks, says a Cambridge botanist. There are a few natural ideal spots, used for lawn tennis, which could be easily flooded to provide skating. The initial cost would be insignificant but the benefit for the young and ‘young at heart’ (meaning dons) would be enormous. The maintenance of the skating rink would be easily covered by a small entrance fee. And it wouldn’t spoil the tennis courts as ice and snow give the best protection for the species of grasses which might otherwise be damaged by the continuous cold. 63 02 02a

1970s

1973

Ice skating rink proposed but no council backing [17.1]

1975 01 25

Cambridge councillors will consider the possibility of turning the old Corn Exchange into an ice-skating rink if plans for converting it into a multi-purpose public hall fall through. Alternatively it might be possible to build the ice rink on spare land between the Parkside swimming pool and the Sports Hall complex. The proposal comes from the Ice Rink Action Group who say there is a growing demand for an ice rink in Cambridge

1977 01 15

Heavy snow hit Cambridge as the worst weather for 14 years caused nationwide chaos and led to widescale disruption on the roads and railways. Weathermen say the snowfalls will be

heavy and prolonged and warm winds could produce drifts. In many places there were snowfalls of more than one foot. Thousands of people were late for work as hard-packed snow, freezing fog and black ice made driving treacherous. And many trains were late or cancelled despite an all-night fight against the Arctic conditions by British Rail who called in their full cold weather emergency procedures. CDN c15.1.1977 [4.11]

1978

Agree in principle to ice skating rink on council land; [17.3]

1979 02 02

The National Skating Association commemorated a hundred years of organised speed skating with a professional match at Bury Fen, Earith watched by 300 people. It was a Cambridge journalist, James Drake Digby, who set up the Association after he had covered the skating at Mepal during the great frost of 1878. He was so impressed by the achievements of the champion of the day, 'Fish' Smart of Welney that he determined to get rid of the cheating caused by heavy betting. He arranged a meeting in Cambridge Guildhall which led to the formation of the NSA with the Mayor as chairman and himself as secretary

1979 02 16

As Britain faced yet another day of icy chaos with more bitterly cold weather on the way, the Army was making plans to move in and clear snowbound roads, said the 'Snow Minister', Mr Denis Howell. In Cambridgeshire workmen battled to clear some of the worst snowfalls, 179 snowploughs and diggers are out but salt stocks are reaching a critical level. Seven weather-hit coach passengers were put up at Parkside police headquarters; they were given mattresses and bedded down in the gym. But there has been a sudden cut back in crime figures; even burglars and thieves are staying at home cCEN 16 Feb 1979

1980s

1981 04 08

Cambridge City Football Club hopes to set up an ice rink at their Milton Road ground using synthetic ice. It would be housed in a semi-permanent aluminium and heavy-duty PVC structure which could also be used for five-a-side football, tennis and exhibitions. They hope it will be in place by June and prove a licence to print money 81 04 08

1985 12 18

Mare Fen, 40 acres of wet grazing meadow near Swavesey which has been purchased by the County Council, will be maintained as an important refuge for rare wildfowl. But it could also be used for skating, marking the rebirth of a well-established local tradition. Friends of the Earth are pleased that its wildlife value has been recognised but are disappointed that the adjoining Cow Fen has now been drained to increase agricultural yield 85 12 18

1987 01 14

The skating French brothers from Peterborough are once again kings of the Fens. They dominated some of the fastest racing ever seen at Bury Fen, Earith. John French, a British Olympian at Lake Placid, beat Alan Fisher in one of the best finals of recent years to win the Fen Championship. His older brother Paul, who had driven through treacherous conditions from Cardiff, beat Willingham teenager Stephen Parker and Sutton-based David Smith for the Melton Morley Trophy. 87 01 14 & 16